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PROCEEDINGS
OF THE
STATE CONVENTION



OF
The Colored Citizens
OF
TENNESSEE,
HELD IN NASHVILLE,

Feb. 22d, 23d, 24th & 25th 1871.

C. LeRoi, Printer, 14 N. College St.

1871

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PROCEEDINGS

Proceedings — OF THE
COLORED STATE CONVENTION,

HELD IN

Nashville, Feb. 22d, 23d, 24th & 25th. 1871.

The State Convention of colored men, heretofore called to meet on Washington's birth day, assembled on Wednesday, 22d inst., at St. John's Chapel on Spruce street in this city, Mr. J. M. Shelton, as chairman of the Davidson County Delegation, called the convention to order and on motion, Mr. E. D. Shaw of Memphis, was chosen temporary chairman, and J. M. Shelton Secretary pro tem. The following members were appointed a committee on credentials: William Butler, Esq., W. F. Anderson, R. M. Hanmer, C. M. Johnson, D. Anderson.

During the absence of the committee, able and interesting addresses were made by Samuel Lowery, John Cockrill and others. The Committee reported the following delegates present:

Davidson County—J. M. Shelton, H. Stevenson, Wesley Terry, Jas. Robertson, Wesley Cloyd, Robt. Johnson, A. H. Gordon, James Allison, Ralph Pulet, Henry Petty, Abraham Price, George Price, Green Hubart, John Cockrill, Aaron Jennings, W. F. Anderson, Rev. M. B. Johnson, Wm. Butler, Esq., Cyrus Cook, Thos. Byzer, Sam Lowery, D. L. Lapsley, Armstead Shelby, R. D. Campbell, J. Biglow.
Shelby County—Ed. Shaw, George Haden, Joseph Lusher, Rev. A. E. Anderson, J. H. Salor.
Williamson County—Peter Ledbetter, John Epps.
Montgomery county—J. W. Poyton, Peter Coraway.
Tipton county—Armstead Boyd, Robert Auston.
Giles county—Robert Johnson, Lewis Dougherty.
Maury county—R. D. Williamson.
Robertson county—A. L. Carr, W. S. Williamson.
Cheatham county—Sylvester Lewis, Carroll Wilson, John McGowan.
Sumner county—C. M. Johnson.
Butterford county—J. P. Price, T. S. Stewart, C. Norman, Alex Webb, J. Brown.
Marshall county—R. M. Hanmer.
Henry County—John Claiborne.
Obion County—Hardy Jackson.

The House adopted a motion of W. F. Anderson for a committee of five on permanent organization, and the chair appointed the following members as such committee: Wm. Butler, Esq., W. F. Anderson, C. M. Johnson, D. Anderson, and R. M. Hanmer.

Two Marshalls were appointed by the chair to reserve seats for the delegates.

The committee on permanent Organization made the following report, which was adopted:

For President—Wm. Butler.
For Vice Presidents—D. L. Lapsley, Ed. Shaw.
Secretaries—Samuel Lowery, Winter Woods.

On motion of W. F. Anderson, the following standing committees were appointed.

On Resolutions: Samuel Lowery, J. P. Price, D. Anderson, John Claiborne.

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On Education: Joseph Lusher, A. L. Carr, John Claiborne, R. D. Williamson, J. W. H. Peyton.

On Outrages and Crimes: A. E. Anderson, C. M. Johnson, T. S. Stewart, Ed. Shaw, J. P. Price.

On Labor and Contracts: J. H. Sailor, R M Hanmer, J P Miller, Richard Ware, Isaac Sharp.

On Finance: W F Anderson, Geo S Hayden, Rev. M R Johnson, J P Price, J M Shelton.

On motion of Rev M R Johnson, the convention adjourned to meet to-morrow morning at 9 o'clock.

SECOND DAY—THURSDAY, FEB. 23.

The Convention assembled at 10 o'clock with Vice President Shaw in the chair. Prayer was offered by Rev A E Anderson.

Mr Samuel Lowery offered a resolution, which was adopted, that the convention secure the picture of Abraham Lincoln, and the flag of the United States, and pay them due honor by placing them in a conspicuous place in the House, which was done, and the pictures of President Lincoln and John Brown, were hung over the President's chair, surmounted by the American flag.

On motion, all ministers present were considered honorary members of the Convention.

An invitation by Prof. E. K. Spence to visit the Fisk University on to-morrow morning at 9 o'clock was accepted.

AFTERNOON SESSION.

The Convention met at two o'clock with President Wm. Butler presiding.

The Finance Committee made a report that each delegate to the Convention be taxed fifty cents to defray the expenses of the Convention. The report was adopted, but subsequently reconsidered and the matter again referred to the committee.

Rev. John Braden, Principal of the Central Tennessee College, was invited to address the Convention. He made a lengthy and very interesting speech, giving much good advice for the benefit of the colored race.

On motion of J. M. Shelton, the Convention resolved to visit the Central Tennessee College on Friday at twelve o'clock.

On the invitation of Prof. Spence, the Convention visited the Fisk University at night, for the purpose of being present at a rehearsal of the Cantata of Esther, which was performed in the most elegant manner by the pupils of that institution. Adjourned to meet at 9 o'clock, Friday morning.

THIRD DAY'S PROCEEDINGS—FRIDAY, FEB. 24.

The Convention was called to order by Vice President Shaw.

After prayer by Rev. A. E. Anderson, the Convention took a recess to visit, by invitation, the Fisk University, after which the members returned to the convention hall.

The following resolutions offered by Mr. Samuel Lowery, were unanimously adopted.

Resolved, That this Convention cordially commend to the colored citizens of this and adjoining States, the Fisk University at Nashville, Tenn., under the management of Prof. E. K. Spence, and the Central Tennessee College, under the superintendence of Rev. John Braden, as institutions worthy of their patronage and esteem, as

these institutions are now doing more to elevate our colored citizens and to break down the barriers to progress, elevate Christianize, and dispel the darkness of ignorance and prejudice than all the powers used by the whole State of Tennessee.

Resolved, That we not only esteem the worthy founders of these institutions as statesmen; but true Christian philanthropists and benefactors of our countrymen.

The Committee on education made the following report which was adopted.

REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION.

The committee on education beg leave to report that the outrages on the school teachers, to both white and colored teachers in colored schools are so great that they have broken up nearly all schools outside of the large cities, which is done by the Kuklux outlaws, who with impunity defy, successfully all attempts that have been made to stop them in their lawlessness. The consequence is there are thousands of children who are growing up uneducated, and ignorance is by this course sown broadcast in our state, inviting every grade of crime and immorality that should alarm not only the lover of humanity, but the patriot, of the welfare of our country. In order to carry out their mischief, they burn school-houses and the churches in which school is taught, besides inflicting punishment of the most horrible and atrocious character upon the persons of teachers.

The committee can see no hope for the general education of the children of our race in Tennessee, unless it be established and adopted by the general government, and the government shall establish schools in behalf of our citizens, who will admit, upon equality, colored children. Even in cities where there are some schools we labor under the most odious proscription which we hope entirely to avoid in the national schools. Each colored citizen cannot but feel degraded, so long as he is forced by the local authorities to separate schools, often of the most unfitting character and purpose. We have a large number of reports from various counties, and in some instances no schools at all. In Shelby county alone there are four thousand children of color not attending school, and most all the schools they have are paid and kept up by subscription. The Superintendent has forbidden in this county, the teachers of colored schools opening the schools by prayer. We most respectfully request this Convention to make known our wants to the general government and request them to take some action to meet our wants, and most respectfully request the adoption of the following preamble and resolutions, and letter with an extract of the common sentiment of our State, from the Clarksville Chronicle Dec. 24, 1870.

Whereas, The Government of the United States has contributed a large fund to establish in each State an Agricultural College; and

Whereas, The State of Tennessee has received and appropriated the fund to a College in this State; and

Whereas, It is the principle of the present government to afford equal political rights to all, irrespective of color; therefore,

Be it Resolved, That the colored citizens of Tennessee request the Congress of the United States to order the doors of such College or Institution shall receive all pupils irrespective of color, and that they be admitted on equal terms;

Resolved, That the colored citizens should be represented in proportion to their population in this College or University: and

Resolved, That we ask in addition, Congress to establish a national school system of instruction which will be impartial to all of our citizens.

A. S. Carr, John Claiborne, R. D. Williamson, J. W. H. Heyton, Committee;

MONTGOMERY COUNTY.

The condition in Montgomery county is shown by the following communication referred to in the report.

EDITORS CHRONICLE:

I see in the Tobacco Leaf of the 22nd ult., a call for a meeting of the citizens of the county, to consult and adopt some plan for the better regulation of the labor system of the county, which is paramount to all other questions at this time.

Intimately connected with this question, is the present school system of Montgomery county. Are the people willing that the County Court, at its January term, shall again levy an additional school tax of about \$9,000, upon the tax-payers of the county, for the purpose of educating the negro children of the county? Do not the developments under existing regulations, show that with the present high government and State tax, the additional county tax of \$9,000 is more than the people can stand? It is well known that the negroes pay comparatively none of this school fund—while in Districts Nos. 1, 6 and 12 there are about two negro children in the free schools to one white—all the negro children go to school. But a part of the white children are kept at home to work for the support of the family. And this is not the worst feature of its working. The proceeds of the labor of these white children are stolen by the negroes to feed their children who are being raised up in idleness. It is impossible for any man, either white or black, from his labor alone, without land to cultivate, teams or implements to till rented land with. It is impossible to support a wife and family of children without the assistance of the labor of a part of the children, but the negroes keep them all at school, hence they are compelled to steal or starve.

The present mode adopted by most of the farmers of the county, to furnish the land, teams, etc., and give the negro one-half they make, is fast destroying the farming interest of this county, and nothing is having so demoralizing an effect upon the negroes: for the negro has really all that the farmer is worth in his own hands; for at the most important time of the crop, if he thinks proper to go to his club meeting, or some place of amusement, if the white man says to him, "Everything will be lost unless you quit running about." What is the negro's reply: "We have a written contract and if you are losing, so am I; we are even on that score; you must stand it." And it is so, for they are equals before the law. We ought to abandon this county tax for free schools and employ the negroes for a stipulated price, in money, or both white and black will go down together. CITIZEN.

We append the following extract from the Clarksville Chronicle of Dec. 3d, copied from the Holly Springs Reporter, to show the spirit of the whites.

Accompanying the report were the following communications which were indorsed by the Convention.

GILES COUNTY.

A public meeting in Giles county reported the following:

GENTLEMAN OF THE CONVENTION:

We deem it our duty to furnish you all the information in our power concerning the present condition of our people.

In the first place we have no Justice before the law, and it seems to us that in many instances we are worse off than when in slavery.

In the second place, a great many of us are driven away from our homes and our crops after having made them and our wives and children reduced to the point of starvation. We have no schools and no teachers, hundreds of our little children are being deprived of the chance for an education for want of schools.

We have but few churches and some of them have been burned down by desperadoes.

As to outrages, we must say that every few days we hear of their being committed in various ways upon our colored citizens.

Oh, Gentlemen of the convention, we, the colored citizens of Giles county, insist that you will use every influence you can bring to bear upon Congress to put a stop to the doings of these desperadoes. For God's sake help us ere we perish.

We believe that if the government were fully apprised of our true condition it would not see its friends trampled in the dust. We will hail all as friends who aid us in making our sad condition known to the world.

CHEATHAM COUNTY.

The report from this county says:
No schools and no churches, with 250 children needing instruction. Wages for men about one dollar per day and board themselves. Women from two to four dollars per month. No outrages reported.

SUMNER COUNTY.

There are ten churches in this county in good condition. Out of some six or seven hundred children one hundred and seventy are attending school. Wages for men are from ten to twelve dollars per month, and for women, from three to six dollars.

There have been seven outrages committed in the county lately, and thirteen persons driven from their homes and crops. Threats and intimidations are numerous.

A meeting was held in the Joyner settlement in this county and reports that the number of children there, not attending school, is twenty-nine, and one church in the neighborhood. They report wages as very low, and the colored people very much intimidated by the Kuklux.

TIPTON COUNTY.

A public meeting held in Tipton county makes the following report:
We have two churches, and have had one burnt down. Out of 500 children in the county only 47 are going to school. Men mostly work for a share of the crop.

DAVIDSON COUNTY.

A meeting in the 24th civil district of Davidson county reported that they have no school nor church in this district. The colored church was burnt down by the Kuklux. There are 32 children in this district. Wages for men are from seven to ten dollars per month and board, and sixteen dollars, boarding themselves. From four to five dollars per month are charged for house rent, and as a general thing, if a man works all the year he will come out in debt.

SHELBY COUNTY.

MEMPHIS, Feb. 24, 1871.—To the State Convention, to meet at Nashville, Tennessee on the 22d inst. We a committee appointed by a county Convention a few weeks ago, held at the Hall of the Sons of Ham, on Gayoso street, to investigate and report the condition of our people, educationally, politically, temporally and morally, would beg leave to submit the following as our report.

The number of public schools (colored) is eleven, taught by the same number of teachers, three of whom are colored; there are also seven select schools taught by the same number of teachers, making in all eighteen colored schools, with, as it is supposed, about three thousand pupils. The number of children out of school is supposed to be about four thousand; the number of churches in the city and county, is said to be twenty-seven which are Baptists and Methodists. The various occupations as followed by our people are common labor, hack driving, barbering, saloon keeping, with a large number of public boarding houses, and we have a number of mechanics who are found engaged in different mechanical pursuits going on throughout the city; we have also a number of merchants on a small scale, and some druggists; our women are engaged principally in washing

and ironing, and youngsters, such as are out of school, are quite too idle, doing but little of nothing. Wages among common laborers range from a dollar and a half to two dollars per day, as a regular thing; hack drivers make from \$35.00 to \$40.00 per week.

As to the amounts realized by laborers and farmers, the past year it has been very poor. A number of farmers have told us that they had labored all the year without realizing a cent, all of which we would most respectfully submit. Hoping that the God of providence may be with you, and that he may guide you by his unerring counsel in your deliberations, and that your Convention may prove a success.

Rev. Blackmon Williamson, Gilbert Algee, E. A. Anderson, Africa Bolley, Wm. Phillips, Morris Henderson, Benjamin Bullit, Malary Brooks, T. Stroteer, Committee.

RUTHERFORD COUNTY.

Whereas, In the county of Rutherford there have been desparadoes and disguised parties who have committed great crimes upon some of the people: they have put to death several to our knowledge, namely, Lewis Ready and Fred Tucker.

CONTRACTS.

The Committee on Contracts submitted the following report which the Convention adopted.

MR. CHAIRMAN:

Your Committee on Contracts and Agreements beg leave to submit the following.

We find that farming labor as a general thing, has proved a failure to the laborer throughout the State, principally on account of the employer not meeting or complying with their contracts which they have made with their colored laborers, and partly on account of the employers refusing to pay their laborers after the crops are made. The colored people living in remote parts of the State, being destitute of the means necessary for their support and protection, are compelled to accept such terms as the employers propose, and therefore the wages received by the laborers will not sustain them, and school their children, even if they were to receive every dollar promised them.

We are sorry to report that the State officials are doing all in their power to retard the progress of colored labor in certain parts of the State, by using the convicts of the State Prison to labor on Railroads and in Coal Mines, and on the Levee at Nashville, thereby throwing out of employment those who have to depend on their honest labor for their living. We are also sorry to inform you that the farmers in different parts of the State are formed in secret conclaves for the purpose of employing the colored people to work on such terms as they propose, and if the colored people refuse to work, they can get no work and are thus compelled to leave the neighborhood, or accept any terms offered them.

J. H. Sailor, Chairman.

R. M. Hanmer, Richard Ware, J. P. Miller, and Samuel Sharp—Committee.

The report is accompanied by the following documents.

FIVE DISTRICTS OF MARSHALL COUNTY.

EIGHTH DISTRICT.

We have no meeting or school houses in this district. We are working for one-half the crop, finding our own stock and feeding them. We are compelled to do this or worse, for they will send the Kuklux after us at night. We are in great need.

NINTH DISTRICT.

The report from the ninth district is about the same as the eighth.

TENTH DISTRICT.

No meeting nor school-house. We have no equal show before the law, while we have to pay taxes as well as the white men. The Kuklux test is, six hundred noises.

ELEVENTH DISTRICT.

We have one meeting and one school-house. We are working for one-half the crop and finding ourselves and stock. We have no say before the law. We are bound to do anything they want done, for if we don't, they will send the Kuklux on us at night. The test is, four hundred noises.

TWELFTH DISTRICT.

No meeting nor school-houses. We are working for one-third or two-fifths of the crop. We have no show before the law. We are obliged to do this to stay here, and then we can hardly do so for the Kukulux. Their test is three hundred noises.

The report includes generally the county. We colored people are suffering greatly. The way we have to work we cannot make a decent support for our families.

[Signed.]

JOHN LOCKWOOD,
Chairman.

M. MORRIS, Secretary.

MONTGOMERY COUNTY.

A County Convention was held in Clarksville on the 18th inst, the result of which is a full report from Montgomery county.

H. R. Roberts was made Chairman and E. J. Conrad Secretary. After appointing the proper committees to make a complete organization, the following reports were made from the different districts, which were laid before this convention.

FIRST DISTRICT.

A. J. Newsom reported the first district as follows:

We have one school, with seventy-eight pupils: two hundred and fifty children not attending school: Two churches. Wages for laborers from eight to twelve dollars per month, common hands 75 cents to one dollar per day and find themselves. Mechanics' wages from 1.60 to two dollars per day. Women's wages from four to five dollars per month.

SECOND DISTRICT.

L. M. Jordan reported the second district as follows:

One school with one hundred pupils and thirty in daily attendance. Many of our laborers are defrauded out of their wages after working the whole year.

The employers will not settle unless we agree to take what they offer, which is so small we cannot live on it. They sometimes offer us clothing at high prices, and we are obliged to take that or nothing. We are abused for voting the Republican ticket.

SIXTH DISTRICT.

William Clark reports one school with eighty pupils and seventy in daily attendance.

Wages for men from ten to twelve dollars, and women from two to three dollars per month. Farming laborers' wages are from 140 to 150 dollars per year, and then we are made to pay for all our provisions.

SEVENTEENTH DISTRICT.

A meeting held at New Providence reported this district as follows:

We have one school with one hundred and sixty pupils in attendance. There are two hundred and sixty children in this district. The average wages are about the same as reported for the sixth district. We were pleased to have the Fifteenth Amendment passed, but are grieved to know that there is no justice for us under it. We have no show before the law. Many of us after working hard and coming out a few dollars ahead, cannot get even that. If we get an execution and put it into the hands of a constable, if it is against a white man, he will keep it awhile and then say he cannot make the money. Some of our friends in the lower part of the county have been badly beaten by masked men but dare not say anything about it.

NINTH DISTRICT.

R. Gordon reported no schools nor school house. A man and his family, having four in the family at work, gets only \$150 a year for all. The neighborhood has made an agreement not to pay more than this.

SEVENTH DISTRICT.

W. Y. Clark reports one school with one hundred and fifty pupils, and twenty in daily attendance. Wages for men from seven to twelve dollars per month, and women from five to seven. At the last election in 1870, no polls were opened in this precinct until three o'clock in the afternoon.

TWELFTH DISTRICT.

Reported by A. R. Campbell and P. N. Rogers: Three schools and seven hundred pupils; daily attendance three hundred and fifty. Wages for men from ten to twelve dollars, and women from three to five dollars per month; mechanics' wages from \$1.50 to \$1.75 per day. The laws are very unjustly executed. Colored men are sent to the Penitentiary for trifles, and white men for the same crimes go free. Some men have been discharged from employment for turning out to bury the dead. The reason why so many colored people flock to towns is, that they cannot get anything for their labor in the country and have no protection.

EIGHTEENTH DISTRICT.

Reported by A. R. Trotter: One school with thirty-five pupils in attendance. Wages for men from \$120 to \$125 a year, and women from three to four dollars a month.

NINETEENTH DISTRICT.

No schools nor churches. Wages same as above. Polls not opened at last election until three p. m.

The Committee on Outrages presented the following report, which was adopted: Nashville, Tenn., Feb. 23, 1871.—The Committee on Crimes, after due consideration of each report of the State, found the condition of the people to be such as to call forth the greatest effort to protect them from the outrages almost daily perpetrated upon them. We find in various portions of the State, for the smallest offences, that men are often put to death, their families outraged, and there seems to be no power to bring to justice the guilty parties. Davidson county owing to its numbers are better treated and protected than any other county in the State. Shelby county, too, owing to their numbers and chances of protection. Yet, within the last nine months there have been not less than seven murders committed by unknown persons. Other outrages and murders have been committed by persons known to the authorities, and no one brought to justice, nor any attempt to bring to justice the guilty parties. If they are abused or murdered, if they are colored people, the plea is put in, not here. In Sumner county they have put out a great many threats, etc., so as to prevent or cause a great many or a majority to leave the county. Bird Swainey, at the Castile Springs, was shot and unmercifully whipped by a band of disguised persons. This and many others of the same crime have been brought to justice, and acquitted. We find the crimes and outrages in the State so numerous that we will not task the convention with further details.

We append the following extract from the Holly Springs Reporter, which the Clarkeville Chronicle copied:

THE NEGRO.

We hear complaints of the negro in every section of our country. In town it is almost an impossibility to get negro cooks; and when obtained they leave on the slightest pretext, and when the slightest pretext is not given, they attend "meetings" every night, and shout and scream till morning, and are unfitted for work during the day. In the country many negroes are neglecting their crops, and cotton and corn are ruining in the fields. A great many have gone in debt for clothing, supplies and gew-gaws, and owe more than their crops will realize. They argue, therefore, that it is folly to pick out cotton and gather corn for other men to enjoy. Our crops are poor enough in all conscience, and the indolence and worthlessness of the negro are making them five-fold worse. We learn that in some neighborhoods the negroes leave their work for whole days together to attend negro militia meetings and negro funerals. A friend informs us that they are preaching the funerals of negroes who died fifteen years ago. If the negro does not improve, a bitter experience tells us there is little hope; other labor will have to be introduced, or farmers will be compelled to cease their efforts to make crops. The condition of the entire Southern country illustrates forcibly the tendency and efforts of Radical reconstruction and negro legislation.

Whereas, In a large majority of the counties of Middle and West Tennessee lawlessness prevails, and desperadoes, masked and armed, are committing crimes and outrages unparalleled in the annals of civilization, spreading terror and devastation to the homes and families of the poor and loyal to this Government; and,

Whereas, Thousands have perished at the hands of these outlaws, and numbers more whipped, outraged and driven from their homes; and,

Whereas, The local and State authorities seem incapable of the task of affording protection to that class of citizens, and have failed to convict in a single case; therefore,

Be it resolved, That the colored citizens of the State of Tennessee request the Congress of the United States to designate Federal Courts that shall assume exclusive jurisdiction over all such crimes committed upon that class of citizens.

Resolved, That Congress be requested to enact a law that the juries in such trials shall be composed of one-half colored citizens.

The report is accompanied by the following proofs:

McMINNVILLE, TENN., Feb. 17th, 1871.

We the colored citizens of Warren county respectfully call the attention of the honorable members composing the convention at Nashville to the following facts, and earnestly ask their assistance, and co-operation in securing the results, which we, as a people, and as citizens of the State and United States pray for, and feel that we are entitled to, viz: Our poll tax is exacted and must be paid, to which we do not object, if we are allowed the same privileges as the whites. We demand justice before the law, and claim our rights in the jury box. It is impossible in most of the counties of the State to get a jury of white men who will do justice to the colored men. In all cases of difficulties between the whites and the blacks, the courts shield and protect the white man; and punish the colored man. As true Republican citizens, we feel the oppression, and call upon the proper authorities to assist in protecting us, and giving us our rights as citizens of the United States. We claim our rights as jurymen in all cases or instances where the interests of our race are at stake. These rights are stolen from us by the sheriff of the county.

We have no common or free school system, by which to educate our children, and we are too poor to give them the opportunities they need for an education.

In many localities or neighborhoods, we have to cast our votes contrary to our wishes, and for the party which has kept us in slavery, for fear of being thrown out of employment or suffering the indignities and afflictions perpetrated by the Kuklux.

We earnestly pray that your honorable body may seek and obtain from the proper authorities the assistance we need.

Isaac Brown, Chairman, John Walker, Lewis Rowan, Peter Rowen, Stephen Randles, Samuel Randles, Alexander Smith.

SMITH COUNTY.

A convention was held in Smith County and reported as follows: There are but five school houses in the county and but one school, which is attended by twenty pupils, while 880 children are out of school. The cause of this large non-attendance is that so many outrages have been committed upon them that the colored people are in a state of terror. One man was killed in the presence of his wife and children, at his own door. Some have made good crops and been well treated, while some have been driven off without a dime. We are kept in a state of intimidation and fear in this county.—AUSTIN GORDON, Chairman. H. Gould, Sec'y.

OBION COUNTY.

Hardy Jackson was lately driven off and his property, worth two hundred dollars, destroyed by desperadoes in Obion county.

On Resolutions the Committee reported the following, which was adopted.

The following resolutions were reported by the Committee Feb. 25th, 1871, and unanimously adopted.

Resolved, That this Convention endorse the efforts of the Hon. W. F. Prosser, in the Forty-First Congress, in urging the Government to the establishment of a national school system, and his appointment of a colored pupil to the West Point Academy, has endeared him to the hearts of his colored fellow citizens as a patriot and a statesman, fully alive to his duties as a Representative and to the interest of his country, and to a majority of his constituents.

Resolved, That the colored citizens of Tennessee, tender their grateful acknowledgements to Congress for the passage promptly of laws enforcing the Fifteenth Amendment to the Constitution of the United States, and to President U. S. Grant, and his Cabinet for faithfully executing and enforcing the principles of liberty and equal rights to all.

Resolved, That our only reasonable hope for protection is in the National Government and Executive, as administered by the Republican Party: That the white citizens, generally of the Southern States who are officials, are bound by oath in secret societies, denying to us all the rights of civil and political privileges and equality

Resolved, That we recommend the colored citizens throughout the State, to identify themselves with horticultural pursuits, secure a homestead and gain a competence by the products of the earth, and as far as possible free themselves from the influence and the dictation of the oppressive land-holder and the more oppressive association named Farmer's Club and Agricultural Societies and Congresses, whose sole purposes are combinations to defeat the payment and employment of honorable and profitable labor to our countrymen; and they are hostile alike to the dignified laborer, whether white or colored.

Resolved, That we advise the colored citizens to acquaint themselves with the German language; that to them we will look as faithful allies in the cause of human liberty, with the ballot to rid our country of the inhuman and unchristian spirit of caste, which has corrupted the church and State, in the hands of an oligarchy.

Resolved, That we tender our thanks to the American Missionary Society, the teachers and instructors at the Fisk University, the Northern M. E. Church, and the Freedmen's Aid Society of the North, for their sacrificing efforts in sustaining schools in our midst, and practicing as well as preaching the highest principles of Christ, of love to God and love to man; the Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of men.

Resolved, That we have unbounded confidencor, which we are glad to express in that patriotic statesman the Hon. Horace Maynard and Gen Wm. B. Stokes who is a candidate for Sergeant-at-arms, of the United States House of Representatives, and is worthy to fill any position within the gift of his country, that patriotism and integrity can command.

Resolved, That the exclusion of colored citizens from the first-class Cars, and from the Churches, Halls and Hotels, and separate Schools, on account of color, is, we think at variance with the principles of Republicanism, devoid of the principles of true Christianity, debasing in tendency, and is the remaining incubus of a foul system of oppression, seeking to continue the debasement of a large class of American citizens, and we most respectfully request the Congress of the United States to give us legal enactments to wipe out these outrages still perpetrated on us by misanthropes and the enemies of our country.

Resolved, That we respectfully ask of Congress aid to secure homes to the homeless freedmen of our country, to appoint a commission which shall be unpaid, to purchase in the South large tracts of land, to be sold by them to the landless in small tracts which will forever be exempt from execution, and shall be paid for by the occupants in instalments running for several years, which shall be re-paid to the United States Treasury; and persons so aided to homes can have aid to sow, plant and harvest the first crop, as a means we think necessary to strengthen the hands of the loyal to our government, and lessen crimes and outrages.

Resolved, That each county be requested to appoint a sub-committee to correspond with the Executive Committee and to furnish as far as possible an accurate account of everything material to the welfare of the colored citizens.

Resolved, That each delegate be requested to pledge for his district and county a certain amount of money, to be placed in the hands of the Executive Committee for national purposes.

Resolved, That this Convention appoint an Executive Committee of fifteen; the Executive and business part to live in Nashville: And the following Committee appointed:

Executive Committee for Middle Tennessee—Davidson County, W. F. Anderson, Wm. Butler, Nelson Walker, D. L. Lapsley, Samuel Lowery, A. Menefee, M. E. Johnson, John Cockrill, C. M. Johnson, J. P. Price, Jackson Golden, J. M. Shelton,

COMMITTEE FOR WEST TENNESSEE.

Shelby County: Rev. J. W. Early, Edward Shaw, Alexander Dickinson, John M. Johnson, J. H. Sailor.

COMMITTEE FOR EAST TENNESSEE.

W. F. Yardley, Esq., A. B. Parker, Rev. G. W. Lanier, David Brown, William Potter, Moses Smith, —Washam.

Resolved, That the Executive Committees appointed shall have all power to act in behalf of the colored citizens in all matters pertaining to the interest and welfare of their race.

Resolved, That this Convention send a delegate to present our cause to the Executive and Congress.

Whereas, The colored citizens of the state of Tennessee desire the success and continuance of the Republican party upon the principles of equality and justice to our race, not only in the assembling in conventions and the deliberations of such bodies, but representation in proportion to our votes by the nomination of candidates for office of colored men of our own race and color: and

Whereas, We have steadfastly as a race supported the Republican party in this State in the elections, both State and National, and there has not been a single colored candidate or person advanced to any position of honor, profit or trust from either: therefore be it

Resolved, That we respectfully ask of the Executive of this government whom we have supported amid the perils of life and limb, and are ready again to go forth and strive to our utmost to re-elect and sustain, to distribute among the colored citizens a fair proportion of the offices, honors and emoluments.

Resolved, That we will not blindly follow the lead of any sham Republicanism which will discriminate against the colored citizens, and fill all the offices with white citizens, while they are to be elected by three-fourths of their votes from colored men.

Resolved, That we believe it to be our duty to take such steps in this convention to reorganize the Republican party. And that a committee be appointed in each division of the State, for the unity of colored citizens to their one common interest of our race, that will insure the success of the people throughout the State.

All of which is respectfully submitted, Samuel Lowery, M. R. Johnson, J. P. Price, D. Anderson, John Claiborne.

The following Resolutions were introduced by the Committee appointed to select a delegate to Washington and present memorials, which was unanimously adopted.

Whereas, Samuel Lowery, Esq., of Nashville, Tenn., has been outraged by the Kuklux outlaws, and his wife and children assaulted and maltreated in the hours of midnight, and we having undoubted confidence in his integrity and patriotism as a citizen, and being confident of his ability to perform the duties of a Representative; therefore

Resolved, That this Convention appoint him a delegate to bear our memorials and resolutions to the General Government and authorities at Washington and represent fully our grievances, condition and necessities.

Resolved, That it shall be the duty of each division of the State to transmit immediately, funds sufficient to pay the necessary expenses of Samuel Lowery as a delegate to Washington city.

J. A. Sailor. J. P. Price, G. H. Johnson. Committee.

At a mass meeting of the colored citizens of Knoxville, Tennessee, February 16th, 1871, the following business was ordered to be transmitted to the State Convention of the 22d, 23rd and 24th of February, 1871:

Resolved, That the colored citizens of Knoxville send to our kith and kin in Middle and West Tennessee our congratulations for the manner in which they have demeaned themselves through the trials which they have gone. We congratulate them upon their achievements in the way of the establishment of schools, churches, and of their devotion to the Federal Government and the Republican Party.

Resolved, That we wish them God speed, and hope their portion of the State may soon be relieved from the curse of Kuklux outrages.

The following are the statistics for Knox county:

Number of colored churches, 14, day schools, 4, sabbath schools, 8, value of property held by colored people, \$120,000.

To the Hon. Henry Wilson, Chairman Military Committee, United States Senate, Washington, D. C.

Your petitioners, colored citizens of the State of Tennessee, and many of us late soldiers in the United States army, respectfully but most earnestly request you to use your best endeavors as Chairman of the Senate Military Committee to secure the favorable action of your committee at an early day as practicable upon the bill introduced by Hon. Charles Sumner, of Massachusetts, giving to colored soldiers and their heirs the same bounties as allowed to white soldiers. Your petitioners would further represent that the colored soldiers fought with equal valor where required, as their white brethren in arms, that they enlisted mostly, if not generally, from purely patriotic motives, not moving or caring at the time for bounties; but upon the cessation of hostilities being thrown upon their own resources to earn a livelihood, though proceeding under difficulties and on an up-hill grade, they nevertheless labored on, and to-day, as they were in the dark days of 1861-2 3, are ready to do or die for the General Government; yet they feel, and protest that the government should not discriminate in the payment of its bounties to one class of its defenders to the exclusion of another, purely on account of color. Your petitioners would further represent that there are many an aged parent of deceased colored soldiers who in the prime of their manhood spent their days in slavery, who now in their old age are struggling hard in their poverty with the cold charities of the world, when, if the Government would extend to him the same benefits in the provisions of the law passed for his white brethren, he could weather the storm, if not pass his remaining days in ease, at least in approximate comfort.

Your petitioners believing you to be the friend of no class of the citizens of the Government to the exclusion of another class, address to you this their petition, believing that when the matter is properly brought to your attention, you will lend your prompt aid to their relief, and to this end will ever pray as in duty bound.

C. C. Cleaveland, Geo. T. Wassan, Henry Jones, David Brown, Samuel Webb, W. F. Yardley, A. B. Parker, J. Halsey, Henry Jones.

The committee on transportation reported the following, which was adopted;

Whereas, many delegates are far from home, and have travelled mostly by railroad, Resolved that a committee be appointed to confer with the various superintendents of the different railroads, and request a free return of the delegates of the Convention over their lines.

D. L. Lapsley, N. Walker, John Shelton, Committee.

We the committee on transportation would most respectfully report that applications have been made at all the railroad departments of Nashville, and have succeeded in getting free transportation on all the roads except the Louisville and Nashville road, and the Agent refuses on the ground that the rules of that road was to give no free passes to any delegation numbering less than twenty.

The above agreement for free passes provides that every delegate shall bring a statement in writing, signed by the secretary of this Convention, stating that he is a delegate to this Convention, on what road he came, and that he paid full fare from his home to Nashville.

The following are gentlemen for the approval of the certificates: Nashville and Chattanooga and Nashville and North-western roads see J. W. Thomas at the depot, Nashville and Decatur road, Col. Sloss. or Reynolds. at depot, Tennessee and Pacific, Maney or Col. Paramore, at N. and C. depot, Edgefield and Kentucky road, see Major Blanton, corner of Locust and College streets, and this we submit to your Honorable Convention.

D. L. Lapsley, John Shelton, Alfred Gordon, Nelson Walker, added to the committee.

Hon. Edward Shaw, of Shelby county, stated that he could name nine school houses that have been burned in his county. He made a startling statement of the condition of the colored people in the State, and urged every member to state particularly in regard to the suffering on every side, and in almost every civil district.

The following from the Committee on Finance was adopted.

FINANCE.

Your Committee on finance would respectfully report in favor of imposing a tax of one dollar upon each member, in order to defray the current expenses of the Convention, and that a donation be taken up from the audience to pay for the use of the house, and your humble committee suggest that they proceed to wait upon the audience forthwith, for that purpose.

W. F. ANDERSON,
Chairman of Finance Committee.

SMITH, DEKALB AND JACKSON COUNTIES.

The delegate from Smith county reported that in the seventeenth district a school house had been burned down lately.

Thomas McClellon, a colored federal soldier was shot down in the act of prayer. He was a member of the African M. E. Church, and an honorable man.

At Prosperity Meeting House, in Dekalb county, the meeting was fired into by Kuklux and the colored men whipped them off and killed one of their number. Col. Joe. Blackburn has been notified to leave Dekalb county.

A colored man in Jackson county was skinned alive. The colored people are not even allowed church privileges.

FOURTH DAY'S PROCEEDINGS, SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 25th.

The Convention met at half past eight o'clock, President William Butler in the chair.

Prayer was offered by Rev. E. A. Anderson.

A vote of thanks was tendered to the various railroads for furnishing free transportation to the delegates home,

A resolution was adopted requesting each member of the Convention to raise funds to pay for the publishing of the minutes of the Convention.

A resolution was adopted requesting the colored people of each county to appoint a committee which should report to the respective Executive Committees in each division of the State.

A resolution was offered that the President appoint a committee of three to select a suitable person to proceed to Washington and to present to Congress the proceedings of the Convention. Adopted, and C. M. Johnson, J. H. Sailor, and J. P. Price appointed said committee.

The committee, after consultation, appointed Samuel Lowery, and the appointment was concurred in by the convention.

A resolution was adopted that each county pay five dollars toward defraying the current expenses of the Convention, except Davidson, which should pay \$20.00, Sumner \$10.00, Shelby \$15.00, and Rutherford \$10.00.

A vote of thanks was tendered to Rev. Tyler, pastor of St. John's Chapel, for the use of the church, also to the officers of the convention, for the efficient manner in which they had presided over the deliberations of the Convention.

The Convention then adjourned *sine die*.

THE MEMORIAL TO CONGRESS AND THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES, ADOPTED AT THE STATE CONVENTION OF COLORED MEN.

The State Convention, held in Nashville February 22d, 23d, 24th, and 25th, would most respectfully submit this petition to Congress and the President of the United States that some action may be taken to ameliorate the condition of the colored citizens of this State. The Convention brought facts to light of the most intense affliction, suffering and destitution which we deplore and view with alarm. A small portion of this correspondence is printed with the minutes and proceedings. The cry of the masses coming up from every quarter is, protection! protection!! protection!!! from the outlaws and desperadoes who swarm by thousands up and down the highways of every district and county, under the secret oath-bound societies known as Pale Faces and KKKKlux, to deny colored citizens every right of citizenship, civil and political. When we inform you that every supporter of the Lost Cause in this State is arrayed and engaged in this malicious effort, and our State being under political control of these men and their sympathizers, then you will realize that there is no redress for us unless the arm of the Government is held out to our rescue.

So great is the influence of these that the laws are in some places openly defied; their masks taken off, and yet the officials refuse to bring any to justice, and in many cases they are with them in person committing murders, outrages and every crime against humanity, and by enrolling the masses of white citizens in secret hostility to the colored citizens and their friends, as a class. This is an almost universal rule, in addition to the crimes committed against them by the organized secret societies of Pale Faces or KKKKlux. They have formed Farmers' Clubs, Agricultural Societies, etc., to depreciate the labor of the colored men and control it by their individual and united action, which, so far, has resulted in the total violation of many of the contracts by the laborer being cheated out of the fruits of his toil, and driven from the premises of the employer, destitute and without remedy—the State laws being a farce in the manner of their execution.

HOMES.

To put an end to this state of things, we ask Congress to aid the landless of our race to secure homes, by appointing an unpaid commission of well-known friends with power to purchase in this State large tracts of land to form settlements upon, which shall be let to colored citizens as homes, exempt from execution by State laws and allow them several years to pay for the same. Should such persons need further aid, said commission can render it on the same terms: and the United States should have a full title to all property purchased until the purchase money is repaid. These purchases of lands to live in settlements so as to enable the settlers to protect themselves from outrages and outlaws so numerous in our State. There being among us quite a number of mechanics and artisans out of employment, it would afford a fitting opportunity not only to prepare a class for usefulness who are now neglected and outraged, but would develop and build up the country, which by nature is fitted for the abode of happiness and peace, but which has been by misguided men, to say the least, transformed to the theatre of the most heartless atrocity and crimes, by those too who claim to be of a superior race, a Christian people and a chivalry. These things are visited upon a poor docile people, whose only crime is Loyalty to the Government of the United States.

EDUCATION.

The public sentiment, as it is expressed by legislation, is averse to the instruction, of colored citizens. The school system inaugurated under the Republican Legislature, although defective in not giving schools on the broad basis of equality—yet stood for schools to the white people, and in some instances established some. No sooner had the rebel element gained power than they repealed the act, and swept every vestige of a law that looked to the education of the colored children, and every right which maintained the civil right of the colored citizen. Although the first oath which they took upon entering office was that they would pass no law impairing the rights or privileges of any citizen. And to-day, over ninety per cent. of the colored children of the State are growing up to the responsibilities of manhood and citizenship, without any public, established system of instruction, and are forced, from the destitute and wronged condition of their parents, to grow up in a servility and ignorance second only to slavery. We trust, as an act of patriotism, that you will give us a national system of schools; of instruction without any invidious restriction to us on account of our color; and that you will regulate the instruction of Agricultural College, founded in this State by donations of United States lands, so that we can have, in proportion to our population, equal terms with others who attend that school.

LABOR.

As the colored citizens in Middle and West Tennessee, are largely the majority of every other class, of laborers more especially in agriculture without some means to secure to them their earnings, a sadder state of affairs awaits us. With but few exceptions this class of laborers are decoyed to do faithful labor in the rural districts, some on the promise of a share of the crop and some for wages, but so soon as the crop is made the employer frames some excuse and falls out with the laborer and he is forced to leave his crop, and abandon his wages, by the terror of Kuklux, who in all cases, sympathies with the white employers. The courts of justice yield no redress in the State. The rebel press are constantly misrepresenting the facts, and that we are cheated. While we thus have no protection, we will warn all immigrants, German, Irish and Chinese, that we are unjustly dealt by and tell them promptly of our treatment and if they come and voluntarily sink down deeper in oppression, so mote it be. But we will gladly hail all voluntary free labor to elevate the laborer, whether from Europe, Asia, Africa or the West Indies, and extend a brother hand to secure him in his liberty the right to his toil and to uphold this government upon equality. In the Capitol of our State the Penitentiary convicts are used by the managers of that Institution to break up the common labor of the coal mines in this State, and the stevedores of Nashville. They are used in loading and unloading boats; in the public works around the State building and if not corrected by legislation, we shall soon see them hired out to private service by the year as servants and sold on the auction block as slaves for the balance of their time.

SLAVERY IN FORCE.

It is in fact another condition of slavery. The whites have agreed to send as many blacks as possible to the Penitentiary, and for misdemeanors for which white men are discharged. We ask to be allowed to sit on juries, and that, in no case of a felony or misdemeanor, should there be a trial of one of our race, unless one third or half of the jury be colored. This will stop their wholesale imprisonment, as it is now done simply to gratify the rage of those who hate us because we are colored and Republicans in principle. And to relieve our colored citizens from paying the State poll tax in voting for United States officers.

In Tennessee a poll tax is demanded from every voter; unless that measure is repealed or made a nullity, in the case of voting for officers for the general government, it will throw off thousands of voters for the general government, for that measure has given already a pretext for additional robbery. In the adjoining counties, men's teams, wagons and furniture which are exempted from execution by State laws, are tried and sold for poll tax. The Constitution of this State at present in force in violation of the Civil Rights Bill, and the amended Constitution of the United States, and it is a barrier to our true development and manhood. We ask Legislation that will neutralize their effects, so we will feel as men when we stand up for the government, and not be handed over to the enemies of the government, hands and feet bound.

We ask of you recognition by the appointment of colored men, to positions of trust and profit in the government, in its departments, in proportion to their support of its principles, as an act of justice to our race in this conflict. The enemies of

liberty, learned and polished, seek this exclusion of us, by seducing often the whites who are weak on giving justice to us on terms of equality, into sympathy with them, and prostituting their principles in their behalf. We hope this request will redily meet your concurrence, to make effective and useful the amendments to the national Constitution that guarantees our citizenship and rights as a people.

As in the past, we in the future, pledge to you all of your efforts, to stand firm to our country, unfetter the chains of the oppressed and break the yoke of the captive. So we can give an elevation to our successors in this bond, to them a bond of freedom and liberty, regulated by law and equality. W. M. Bulter, Chairman, Samuel Lowery, Secretary.

The Committee on Outrages and Crimes presented Convention the following **Klux** Oath, which was in the Union Flag, published in Jonesboro, by Col. George S. Grisham, Feb. 24, 1871, which was read by the Secretary from the platform, being called for by Mr. Ed. Shaw, to show to the members the principles of the organization, which is all over the State.

PALE FACES—OATH OF THE "WHITE BROTHERHOOD."

For some time past the most diligent search has been made for the ritual and formula of the "Pale Faces." The following comes to us, by authority, as one of the Oaths of the Klan. The entire ritual will soon be disclosed; and it will show a dark and hellish intrigue, almost without a parallel of infamy:

"You solemnly swear, in the presence of Almighty God, that you will never reveal the name of the person who initiated you; and that you will never reveal what is now about to come to your knowledge, and that you are not now a member of the Red String Order, Union League, Heroes of America, Grand Army of the Republic or any other organization whose aim and intention is to destroy the rights of the South, or of the States, or of the people, or to elevate the negro to a political equality with yourself; and that you are opposed to all such principles. So help you God.

You further swear before Almighty God, that you will be true to the principles of this brotherhood and the members thereof; and that you will never reveal any of the secrets, orders, acts or edicts, and that you will never make known to any person, not a known member of this brotherhood, that you are a member yourself, or who are members; and that you will never assist in initiating, or allow to be initiated, if you can prevent it, any one belonging to the Red String Order, Union League, Heroes of America, Grand Army of the Republic, or any one holding radical views or opinions; and should any member of this brotherhood, or their families be in danger, you will inform them of their danger, and, if necessary, you will go to their assistance, and that you will oppose all radicals and negroes in all their political designs; and that should any radical or negro impose on, abuse, or injure any member of this brotherhood, you will assist in punishing him in any manner the camp may direct.

You further swear that you will obey all calls and summonses of the chief of your camp or brotherhood, should it be in your power so to do.

Given upon this, your obligation, that you will never give the word of distress unless you are in great need of assistance; and should you hear it given by any brother you will go to his or their assistance, and should any member reveal any of the secrets, acts, orders or edicts of the brotherhood, you will assist in punishing him in any way the camp may direct or approve of; So help you God.

On motion W. F. Anderson was appointed by the Convention to receive all moneys to defray the expenses of the Convention, and to send a Delegate to Washington to bear Memorials to Congress and the President.





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